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RECREATION



Va-W-110

A New Farm Business

Recreation opportunities on the Nation's privately owned farm, ranch, and woodland, which comprise nearly three-fourths of our land area, are virtually unlimited.

These lands have the potential to meet much of the recreation needs of an expanding population while opening up a new source of income to rural landowners and operators.

The simple recreation activities are the most in demand. Some people want to swim, hike, picnic, or fish. Others want to hunt, camp, boat, or just relax. Farmers and ranchers can develop facilities for these activities

by proper management of soil, water, plant, and animal resources on their lands. Some are switching land from crops in overabundance into profitable recreation enterprises. Some are developing recreation facilities on formerly idle areas of their land. Others are combining recreation and farming on the same land.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture, as a part of its Rural Areas Development effort, offers technical and financial help to rural landowners who want to develop a recreation enterprise as an alternative use of their land and water resources.

Possible recreation enterprises have a wide range, from the very simple to the more elaborate ones. Farmers and ranchers in many parts of the United States have already developed vacation farms; picnicking and sports centers; fishing waters; camping, scenery, and nature recreation areas; wildlife refuges; hunting areas or shooting preserves, or are selling recreation land or recreation use rights.

A Pennsylvania farmer converted his 160-acre dairy and stock farm into a recreation enterprise. He has a 9-hole golf course in operation and a second 9-hole course under construction. He plans to add a swimming pool, picnic area, clubhouse and fishing facilities. His new enterprise nets approximately 5 times his former income from the farm.

Recreation Boosts

Farm Income

An Alabama dairy farmer converted his 250-acre dairy farm to recreation. Facilities on his farm include golf course, fishing ponds, playground, picnic tables, concession stand, a meeting place for groups, softball fields, areas for horseshoes, badminton and shuffleboard, swings, rides, and games. The admission charge is 10 cents a person for the recreational area and 50 cents for golf or fishing. The farmer figures his income has doubled since he converted from dairying.

A farmer of 800 acres in Illinois runs a year-round vacation farm along with his regular farming enterprise. State parks, historical sites, several golf courses, and lakes are within a short drive of his farm. Two rivers nearby supply fishing and boating. On the farm, guests are provided wooded area for camping, saddle horses and ponies, hiking, horseshoes, badminton, ping pong, and shuffleboard, outdoor barbecue, hayride and wiener roast, and meals if desired. Observing farm operations has proved to be a popular attraction.

A 29-acre lake in a Texas small-watershed project gave a shareline farmer-landowner the opportunity to develop a recreation area. He set aside 8 acres of waterfront land for picnicking, camping, volleyball, softball, and croquet and he built a fishing pier and a diving platform. The lake supplies fishing, boating, skiing, and swimming. The owner added a clubhouse and concession stand which are available to groups at a small rental fee. Tables and barbecue grills are available for picnickers and campers. Use of the facilities is by annual family membership. About 12- to 15-hundred people use the facilities each year.

An Iowa father-son team converted 80 acres of their 240-acre dairy and hog farm into a 9-hole golf course, and are planning to expand to 18 holes. Much of their farm equipment has been used in seedbed preparation, grass planting, and maintenance. Their farm pond is a source of water for operating a sprinkling system on the fairway and greens. The course attracts as many as 500 golfers on a good weekend.

During hunting season, hunters from as far as Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cleveland spend a week or two on a 4,000-acre farm owned by a veterinarian in Georgia. Hunters pay \$35 a day. Wives are charged \$10. For their money, guests are provided food, lodging, dogs or kennels, care of hunters' dogs, guides, transportation to and from hunting areas, and an abundance of game.

The owner of a 400-acre woodland in Maine operates his land as an income-producing tree farm and offers skiing, tobogganing, ice skating, snowshoeing, sleigh riding, swimming, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, hunting, exploring, picnicking, bird watching, and nature study. He boards about 30 horses at \$33 a month. The recreation enterprise is operated by an incorporated association made up of the owner and seven others. Use of the facilities is by membership.



Many farm ponds and small watershed reservoirs are stocked with fish and open to the public for a small daily fee. The honor system works well for this farmer in Kansas who collects \$1 for a day's fishing. Some pond owners also rent boats, sell bait and other supplies. Kans-1947

Cover picture--Water areas furnish a desirable setting for recreation activities. This scenic lake on a Virginia farm is the center of a profitable recreation enterprise. Visitors can swim or relax at the sandy beach, camp or picnic along the lake, or dance at the nearby pavilion. Va-W-110

A former stock pond provides a place to swim at this New York vacation farm. The owner has 75 campsites, for which he charges \$2 the first day and \$1.50 for each additional day. A small store in the barn supplies campers' needs. The farm, which is near three State parks, is ideally located to attract touring campers. NY-993

Children at this North Carolina farm get a real taste of rural life--they ride horses, feed the cows and chickens, and help with milking and rounding up cattle. They also can participate in archery, arts and crafts, and nature study, or swim, fish, or hike. NC-D11-39



A pleasant shady spot combined with picnic facilities are basic to a good camping site. These travelers pay a daily fee to camp at this West Virginia farm while they sightsee in the area. WV-717



An enterprising New Hampshire dairy farmer supplements his income during the winter by developing a ski slope on his property. A warming hut and rope tow add to the skiers' convenience. NH-160



Reservoirs formed as a result of a small watershed project offer wide opportunity for recreation development. People at this Texas site enjoy fishing, swimming, boating, water skiing, and picnicking. Tex-49845



Pleasing rural sites for cabins, especially when near water, have strong appeal to many urban families. Farmers often sup-

plement their income by selling or leasing sites such as these along a Missouri River lagoon in Nebraska. Neb-2117

An Alabama farmer-aircraft plant worker operates fish ponds as a part-time project on his 400-acre farm. He has 8 ponds ranging from 2 to 10 acres in size. Boats and parking space are free. He charges 50 cents a pound for fish caught and "skins" catfish for his customers at 5 cents a pound. During this second year he sold 22,000 pounds of fish.

Forty businessmen rent a 20-acre lake from a former in Mississippi. In 10 years, the rentals will pay for the entire farm.

In Iowa, a farmer set aside seven acres of his farm for a recreation area. He built a 3-1/2 acre lake and stocked it with bluegill and bass. He set up duck blinds and planted shrubs for wildlife. Use of the area is by membership of \$25 a year.

A golf club obtained a 40-year lease from a Georgia farmer for 200 acres at an average of \$3900 a year. They have constructed a nine-hole course and plan to add another 9 holes. Part of the acreage will be used for horseback riding, hiking, and other recreation.

The owner of land surrounding a lake in a Texas small watershed project leases the lake and 35 adjoining acres at \$125 a month to a private recreation club. The club has developed facilities to provide swimming, water skiing, boating, picnicking, fishing, and camping. The club pays for improvements, operation, and maintenance of the area. The landowner estimates that nearly 3,300 use the area a year.

Many farms and ranches can be developed as hunting preserves such as this one in Virginia. Contour strip-cropping of grain furnishes game birds with cover and food. Pheasants and quail are pen raised and released on the farm throughout the six month hunting season. Va-W-97



New Uses For Land And Water

A farmer in Georgia plans his cropping system so that he will have a field of browntop millet ready for harvest about two weeks before the dove season opens. He permits a group of approximately 10 hunters to hunt this field for \$5.00 on afternoon.

An operator of an 81-acre farm in South Carolina has found raising minnows a paying business. He built eight ponds varying in size from 1/4 to 1-1/2 acres. He sells more than 100,000 minnows a year, some going to points 100 miles or more away.

The U. S. Department of Agriculture assists rural land owners and operators to develop hunting, fishing, and other income-producing recreation enterprises as a part of a conservation farm plan. Most of the assistance is given through soil and water conservation districts, which cover 93 percent of the Nation's land in farms. The USDA offers technical and financial assistance that includes:

- ... Information about soil, water, and other natural resources.
- Advice and assistance to landowners in preparing plans for recreation and resource development. Designs for recreation facilities and improvements. On-site technical assistance in locating recreation facilities, planting grass and trees, and the like.
- ... Loans to landowners for soil, water, forestry, and wildlife conservation practices and to family farmers for purchase, construction, and operation of recreation facilities.
- ... Cost sharing in establishing soil and water, forestry, fish and wildlife practices on farms and ranches.

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